



Health in Season

Change starts within each of us – step by step, season by season.

JOURNEY HEALTH QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2025



Seasonal spotlight:

A personal Reflection on Health and Wellness in Our Current Season

Now that we're (hopefully) past weeks of seemingly endless "spring showers", we approach my favorite season of all: Summer! Summer offers an ideal opportunity to realign your habits with your health goals—especially for metabolic health, hormonal balance, and stress regulation.

To me, summer has always been the time to optimize. The long days, relaxed schedules, vacation time, and warm temperatures allow me to focus on the things that make me feel my best: playing outside, enjoying an abundance of seasonal produce, and connecting with my family and friends in a way that feels both carefree and soul filling.

(I'm sure the the vitamin D optimization contributes to these feel-good feelings!)

I hope you enjoy these personal reflections as I keep you informed, inspired, and connected.

Warmly,
Katelin

MOVE IN SEASON

Practical Tips to Keep your Body Moving with Purpose, No Matter the Season

Simple Sun Salutation (*Surya Namaskar*)

Why do I recommend this?

Summer invites us to rise with the light—and move with it. There’s no better way to greet the day (and your body) than with a few rounds of Sun Salutations. This flowing yoga sequence blends breath, mobility, strength, and mindfulness in a ritual as energizing as a cup of coffee—but with added metabolic and hormonal benefits. I particularly enjoy the cortisol-reducing benefits of the mind-body work, and gentle stretching / joint mobility that can counteract morning stiffness or after chasing my children around at the playground.

Bonus: Turn it into a mindful movement break with kids or your partner—no yoga experience needed! Everyone can benefit from a 5-minute full-body reset.

Time: 5 minutes (or longer!)

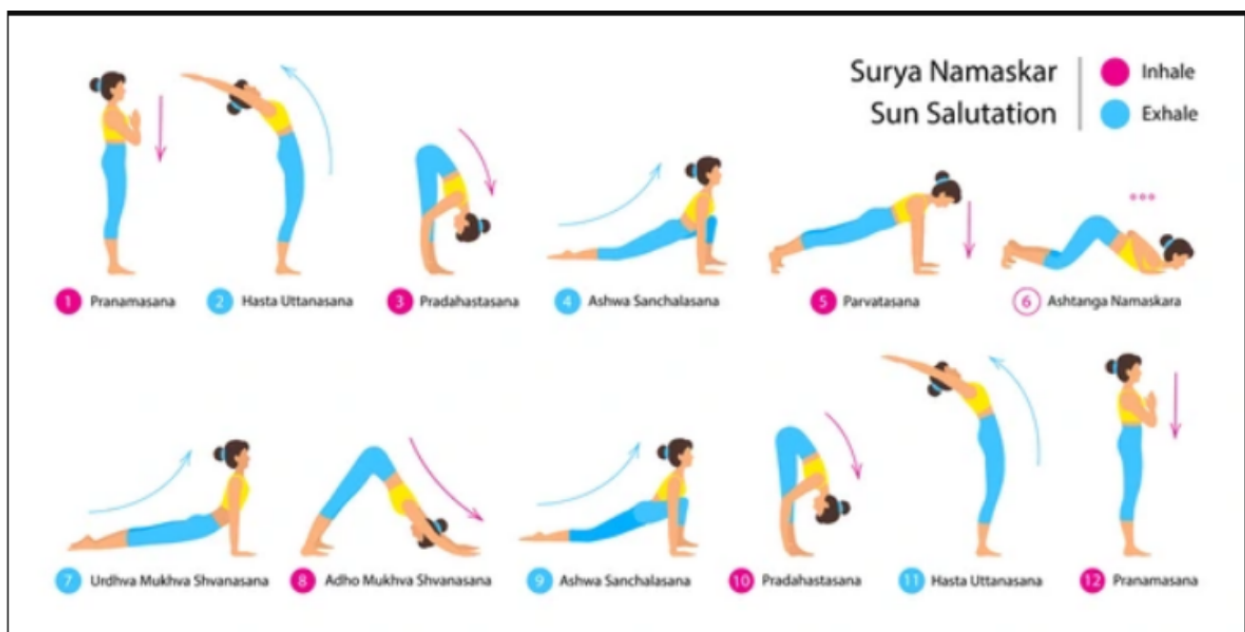
Equipment: None (Yoga mat, carpet, or outdoors on grass can be more comfortable)

Difficulty level: beginner (increase intensity per your fitness and comfort level)

Warm up: Close your eyes and take 3 mindful belly breaths (inhale deeply through your nose, allowing your abdomen to expand fully, then exhale slowly allowing your abdomen to contract.)

Exercise: Follow this sequence (2-5 rounds)

- Sync your breath: inhale to rise, exhale to fold or lower
- Modify for your body— movements should cause gentle stretching, not pain.
- Prefer a video? Check out this helpful tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nic2mjLRYKg>



SAVOR THE SEASON

Seasonal Recipes That Celebrate The Gifts That Nature Provides

Grilled Mediterranean Chicken Kabobs with Vegetables

Author: Maya Krampf

Why do I recommend this?

#1 - Food on a stick = more fun! Even toddler age children can enjoy playing with the colorful combination of vegetables as they stack them on their own skewer for the grill. (Only adults should handle raw meat and wash hands / surfaces well after preparing. Tip: separate the meat from the vegetable skewers and let everyone play with their food)

#2 - Super customizable! Sample a variety of colorful and seasonal produce to bring diversity to your palate and body. Eating vegetarian or vegan? Try grilled tofu or tempeh as a protein-rich alternative to chicken. It's a "Clean out the fridge" kind of meal!

#3 - Lean protein + variety of vegetables = perfect combination for hormone balancing and gut microbiome support.



Prep time: 20-25 minutes (warning: longer with little helpers!)

Rest: 30 minutes - 24 hours (in refrigerator after marinating)

Cook time: 15 minutes (Depending on the size of your pieces)

Total time: 1 hour

Ingredients:

- 1 lb Boneless skinless chicken breasts (cut into 1.5 inch pieces)
- 6 baboo skewers (more if you are separating vegetables from meat)
- 2 large bell peppers (cut into 1.5 inch pieces)
- 2 medium zucchini (cut into 1.5 inch rounds)
- 1 package button mushrooms (can leave whole if 1-2 inch diameter)
- Greek marinade (I like "Primal Kitchen" Greek marinade with avocado oil)

Tip: Soak wooden skewers for 30-60 min to prevent burning while grilling and use a meat thermometer to check food-safe temperatures (165 degrees F for chicken)

Instructions:

- 1.) Thread the pre-cut chicken and vegetables onto pre-soaked bamboo skewers
- 2.) Place kabobs in a casserole dish or cookie sheet and pour the marinade on top
- 3.) Cover and refrigerate for 30 min - 24 hours
- 4.) When ready to cook, heat grill to medium-high heat

5.) Place chicken kabobs on grill and cover. Cook 5-8 minutes per side until chicken is cooked through

Nutritional Information: Varies dramatically depending on which vegetables and protein you utilized.

Serving size: ¼ of recipe (4 oz of chicken breast) = 30 grams of protein, 0 grams of carbohydrates, 0 grams of fiber

Vegetables ideas: non-starchy vegetables (e.g. bell peppers, zucchini, onion, summer squash, mushrooms, eggplant, tomatoes, brussel sprouts, cauliflower ... endless possibilities!)

SEASON OF CHANGE

Mindful Interventions for Lifestyle Change, Growth and Living Intentionally

Sleep Routines That Stay Strong All Summer

Celebrate unstructured, fun-filled days while balancing the necessity of sleep

Why do I recommend this?

Sleep is one of the most underappreciated ways we regulate our hormones. All humans, infants to elderly, require sleep to promote a myriad of health benefits. From metabolism to brain health, we need to optimize our sleep regimens in sustainable ways all year long to keep circadian rhythms on track.

The problem:

Long days and unstructured schedules can disrupt our sleep patterns in many ways:

- Longer daylight hours delaying melatonin release
- Later dinners, screen time, or social events pushing back bedtime
- Inconsistent wake-up times confusing the body's internal clock



Although it can feel harmless, irregular sleep can lead to:

- Dysregulated cortisol (leading to more stress, cravings, and inflammation)
- Insulin resistance (increasing the risk for weight gain or metabolic issues)
- Altered satiety (fullness) and hunger hormones (leading to appetite dysregulation)
- Reduced protein synthesis and muscle hypertrophy (reducing the effectiveness of exercise)
- Mood instability (especially in perimenopausal women and adolescents)
- Weakened immune response (think summer vacations and camps with close quarters!)

Here's what you can do about it:

For Kids & Teens:

- Keep a wake-up time within 60 minutes of the school-year norm
- Encourage "wind-down" routines even on non-school nights
- Limit screen exposure 1 hour before bed and dim lights after dinner
- Get outdoor light in the morning to reset melatonin production



For Adults:

- Go to bed and wake up within the same 1–1.5 hour window daily
- Keep bedrooms cool and dark, especially in warm summer nights (skylights? try a sleep mask!)
- Avoid heavy meals, alcohol, and screens late in the evening
- Try gentle evening rituals like stretching, journaling, or herbal tea

SHIFTING SEASONS

What's changing in Health and Wellness

Intermittent Fasting and Weight Management at Menopause

In today's fast-moving digital world, health information spreads faster than ever—with very little of it being grounded in actual science. Our smart devices bring us a seemingly endless supply of “experts” who promote fad diets to miracle cures. Conflicting advice can leave patients confused and skeptical. While part of the controversy stems from the complexity of human health (what works for one person may not work for another) new research often challenges old beliefs that may have once been considered the “standard of care” and can make even your most trusted source of information seem uninformed. This is why *evidence-based interventions are essential*. They rely on rigorous studies, clinical trials, and real-world outcomes—not trends or opinions. An article, recently published in the April 2025 edition of Journal of mid-life health (the official publication of The Indian Menopause Society) *gives a fresh look on this particularly controversial issue*.

Menopause brings major hormonal shifts—especially drops in estrogen and progesterone—that slow metabolism, shift fat from hips/thighs to the abdomen, accelerate muscle loss, and increase insulin resistance and appetite. These changes often lead to the dreaded “menopause belly,” setting the stage for weight gain, visceral fat accumulation, and elevated risk of conditions like heart disease and diabetes. Intermittent fasting may provide an advantage to many midlife women.

Fasting is the voluntarily process of not consuming calories (either food or beverage) for a period of time. Humans have fasting throughout history for survival, culture, and spirituality. Before grocery stores and door dash, people went through natural periods of time without food. Fasting was part of the human rhythm—during winters, long hunts, or food scarcity. Our ancestors were able to adapt to these breaks from food by developing ways to store energy as fat in times of excess, and switching to fat-burning for fuel in time of scarcity.

For most of us living in the developed world, we are fortunate to not face famine. Unfortunately, we now have an abundance of calorie-dense, processed, nutrient-poor food available at our fingertips virtually anytime we desire. And we consume this food in bodies that are still programmed with ancient DNA, passed down from the genes our ancestors, that can result in an excess of stored energy (fat), particularly in our midsection. This type of visceral (abdominal / organ) fat is often disease-provoking, resulting in metabolic health problems, including diabetes, high cholesterol and more. A peri/postmenopausal woman has the additional burden of midlife whole-body hormonal change, when her ovaries no longer produce the necessary type of estrogen and progesterone that promote a healthy metabolism, waist circumference, and body composition maintenance.

Intermittent fasting (IF) is a pattern of eating that alternates between periods of eating and fasting—without necessarily changing what you eat, just when you eat. It's not about starving—it's about giving the body a break from constant digestion so it can shift its focus to other processes like fat-burning, cellular repair, and hormone regulation. IF can produce health benefits, including supporting insulin sensitivity (optimizing the use of insulin hormone) and reducing visceral fat accumulation. This may be especially powerful for someone who is already showing signs of insulin resistance or prediabetes.

This article explored the different approaches to IF (time-based, day-based) specifically for postmenopausal women and highlighted the importance of sustainability (hint: time-restricted eating was more sustainable than alternating day fasting). More research is certainly needed, but the article was a welcome exploration of weight management specifically for peri/postmenopausal women. Furthermore, we know that the risk of developing type II diabetes significantly increases for women at midlife, and IF may be a great tool to reduced that risk.

If you are a midlife woman considering adding IF to your tool box, I caution you to START SLOWLY and aim for sustainability. A gentle, 12–14-hour overnight fast, and a food window that is enriched with balanced meals (including protein and fiber) and good hydration, is an excellent place to start. And if you're a person who has a unique circumstance (E.g. diabetes, mood disorder, eating disorder/disordered eating history, taking certain medications, like weight loss drugs) it might not be right for you.

As someone who has personally practiced IF for years, I have watched the evidence for and against it subtly change over time. This article solidifies my confidence in recommending this intervention to the right women during and after her midlife hormone changes. And for me personally? I will continue to practice 14-16 hour intermittent fasting as ONE of the tools in my toolbox. But I don't hesitate to search for new and updated information along the way. I believe part of the journey is remaining curious and passionate. We PRACTICE medicine and integral to this massive responsibility is to CHOOSE to evolve. Instead of feeling overwhelmed or powerless when I see new or conflicting information, I choose to remain open to the pursuit of evidence-based interventions to optimize the health of my patients, my family and myself.

Source: Garg, R., Chetan, R., Jyothi, G. S., Agrawal, P., & Gupta, P. (2025). Intermittent Fasting and Weight Management at Menopause. *Journal of mid-life health*, 16(1), 14–18. https://doi.org/10.4103/jmh.jmh_227_24